

WORD FOR SUNDAY

Father Albert Shannon

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Kgs. 19:16-19-21 (R2) Gal. 5:1,13-18. (R3) Lk. 9:51-62.

Running through Scripture is the basic notion of **call or choice**. Generally the call takes a person from where he is. After a miraculous catch of fish, Jesus called His first four disciples. While Elisha was plowing, Elijah called him by throwing his cloak over him — a symbol that Elisha was to carry on his work.

To every call there is a response. As the call is personal, so is the response. Some respond generously like Elisha, who left all and followed Elijah. And Elisha had much to leave; he must have been wealthy, for he plowed with twelve yoke of oxen. Others are less generous, like the two in the Gospel who spontaneously offered to follow Jesus. But once Jesus explained the cost of discipleship, they turned back. We never seem to hear of them among His disciples.

To what does God call us? He calls us to freedom (R2). The old terms **redemption** and **salvation** have lost their ring for us, much as coins lose their lustre through usage. So today, other words are being used to express redemption and salvation; words like **freedom** and **deliverance**.

Not so long ago there was a movie, **Deliverance**. Regardless of what you may have thought of the merits of the film, it did create the horrendous experience of what it felt like to be trapped by someone seeking to murder you. The conflict between the hunter and the hunted was so vividly dramatized that you literally sighed relief when two of the trapped men finally were **delivered**, redeemed, from the threatening death.

Twice in Old Testament history, God delivered His people: once from the hell of Egyptian slavery; the second time from the purgatory of Babylonian captivity. Scripture refers to both instances as "redemption." Both cases are types of the redemption Jesus came to bring — a liberation, freedom.

Another hackneyed expression is that Jesus freed or delivered us from "the slavery of sin." The expression makes little impact, because we are unfamiliar with slavery and hardly conceive of sin as slavery. Oscar Wilde called sin "sweet sin." Yet if you would know something of the enslaving power of sin, ask the drug addict to abandon his drugs, the alcoholic his drink, or the lecherous his forbidden pleasures. In fact, before Christ the human race was so hopelessly and helplessly entrapped by sin that it yearned for some god to come and save it. God in His mercy sent His Son as Saviour.

Someone once asked what was the difference between Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. He was answered by this illustration: "If you were walking and fell into a deep pit, Buddha would lecture you. He would tell you that you should have watched where you were going. Confucius would give you wise advice on how to get out. But Jesus would reach down and pull you out." Redemption is God's reaching down to free us, deliver us from the pit of sin and death.

Freedom, however, is a two-way word. There is freedom from and freedom for. One cannot be separated from the other. Archbishop Sheen used to tell the

story of the man who asked a taxi-driver if he were free. When the taxi-driver said he was, the man walked down the street shouting, "Hurrah for freedom." We would forgive the taxi-driver if he promptly ran the man down or had him committed.

Everyone knows freedom from is freedom for. That is what St. Paul is making clear. "It was for liberty that Christ freed us. You have been called to live to freedom. So stand firm, and do not take on yourselves the yoke of slavery a second time!" (R2).

Because liberty made such great demands on the Hebrews after their freedom from Egyptian slavery, they yearned for the fleshpots of Egypt. They preferred the "security" of slavery to the responsibilities of freedom. And we? Do we abuse our freedom to follow the lusts of the flesh, or do we use it to be guided by the Spirit?

Father Hill Praises Law

New York [RNS] — Father Morton A. Hill, SJ, the national anti-pornography leader, has hailed the passage of the new obscenity law in New York State as a gratifying action that will have far-reaching effects across the nation.

"The U.S. Supreme Court wanted specifics, and the New York law has them," said Father Hill, former member of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography who is national president of Morality in Media, Inc.

He said the New York law "should be of great interest to every lawyer and every community in the nation — a prosecutor now has no doubt

about what the law is. Up to now, they've been saying that the law is confusing."

Following the guidelines of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on obscenity, New York's new law states: "Any material or performance is 'obscene' if (a) the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that considered as a whole, its predominant appeal is to the prurient interest in sex, and

"(b) it depicts or describes in a patently offensive manner, actual or simulated sexual intercourse, sodomy, sexual bestiality, masturbation, sadism, masochism, excretion or lewd exhibition of the genitals, and

"(c) considered as a whole it lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value. Predominant appeal shall be judged with reference to ordinary adults unless it appears from the character of the material or the circumstances of its dissemination to be designed for children or other specially susceptible audience."

CDA CONVENTION

Mrs. Frank Donahue, New York State CDA regent will attend a regent's workshop July 12-13 and will then head the New York delegation to the 35th biennial national convention of the group July 13-19 in Los Angeles.

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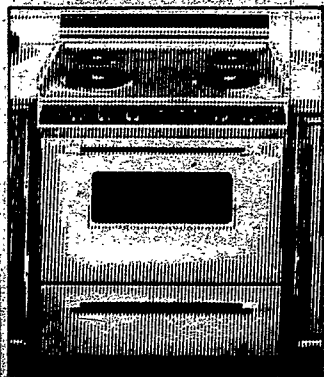
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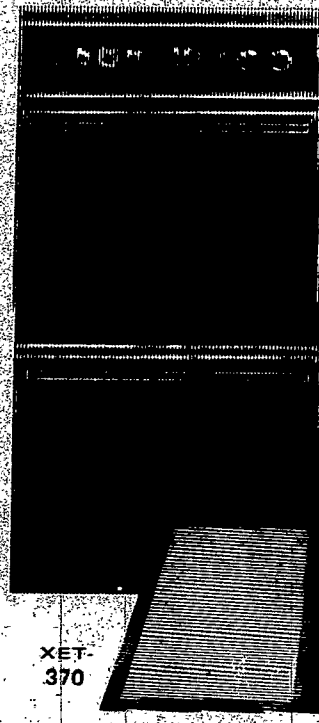


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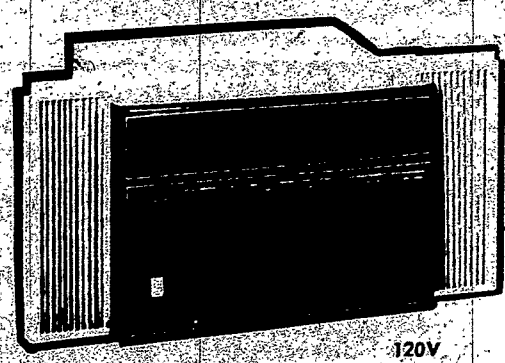


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